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SIPDIS

STATE PASS EUR/WE, IO/RHS, DRL/MLGA, USUN-W FOR JENNIFER  
SIMON, MISSION GENEVA FOR MARK CASSAYRE, ANNA CHAMBERS,  
MELANIE KHANNA AND ANNA MANSFIELD, USUN/NEW YORK FOR CRAIG  
KUEHL, JOHN SAMMIS AND LAURIE PHIPPS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UN](#) [PINR](#) [BE](#)  
SUBJECT: BELGIUM'S PERSPECTIVE ON UNHRC

REF: A. BRUSSELS 292  
[1](#)B. BRUSSELS 491

Classified By: Robert Kiene for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request, please see paragraph six.

[1](#)2. (U) Poloffs met July 13 with MFA Director for Human Rights  
France Chainaye. Chainaye discussed Belgium's role as  
President of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)  
and the GOB's perspective on its work.

[1](#)3. (U) Chainaye said Belgium had no choice but to run for the  
Council once it became clear that there was no other viable  
candidate from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG),  
as the Netherlands and Italy were not eligible due to their  
rejection of the Durban text. Belgium also stepped up to  
ensure that a WEOG country would be elected President.  
Belgium was not seeking this role when it ran for the UNHRC  
because it felt it would be handicapped in pursuing its own  
agenda by the neutral role required of the Council President.  
Chainaye noted that the president of the council cannot  
introduce measures or take an activist role. The GOB sees  
its role as President as building alliances with moderates,  
staying abreast of the positions of various countries and  
factions, and trying to make council processes work.  
Chainaye described this as "damage control," trying to keep  
certain countries from undermining the UNHRC. She lamented  
that Belgium must wait until its Presidency ends in 2010 to  
use its final two years as a member of the Council to play  
the activist role it had wanted. Chainaye said that despite  
the recent change of Foreign Minister in Brussels, from  
Karel De Gucht to Yves Leterme, there will be no change in  
Belgium's strong support for human rights in international  
 fora. Chainaye is leaving the Human Rights Directorate to be  
Belgium's Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris. Her replacement is  
expected to be Marc Pecsteen, the current CG in Shanghai.

[1](#)4. (C) When queried on Belgium's view of the UNHRC, Chainaye  
said Belgium sees the UNHRC and the Third Committee as a  
important vehicles for human rights. She commented on the  
challenge that the three sessions of the UNHRC and the Third  
Committee with like-minded partner international human rights .p@  
`eh`hthe process is  
open Qs, specifically Cuba, lobby friendly, non-confill the  
docket during the singled out  
Cuba's use of "Qant" strategy, whereby  
several small Caribbean nations filled most of the reviewing  
slots right after the Cuban reception when the docket opened.  
Thus, only a few challenging questions were asked by WEOG  
and other like-minded countries that managed to get on the

tail-end of the docket.

15. (C) Chainaye reaffirmed Minister De Gucht's statement to Secretary Clinton at their March meeting that Belgium is pleased that the United States is on the UNHRC for the next three years. She predicted the U.S., Belgium, and the E.U. would be partners on most issues, but warned there might be some disagreements on certain Middle East questions.

16. (C) ACTION REQUEST: The MFA asked for a list of U.S. priorities and the U.S. evaluation of the UNHRC so far. Post requests talking points and background we can provide to the GOB by August 17. We should provide this information prior to September for it to be useful in Belgian planning for the fall human rights meetings. Post views this as an excellent opportunity to share with the GOB U.S. UNHRC priorities and the U.S. vision on human rights. The GOB is open to working closely with us, and Post believes we should actively engage them.  
BUSH